



On the Cover
By [Karl Rabe](#)

Magic Messenger March 2023

IBM 210

SAM 88

The Magic Messenger



**The Official Newsletter of
The Ann Arbor Magic Club**

On the Cover member Phil Mann returns from a trip to Vegas and shares some of his recent acquisitions with the club.

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President's Corner By Dan Jones

Hello Fellow Compeers. What a great way to kick-off the year for the AAMC. In the first two months of the year we have signed up 5 new members. We would like to welcome Mark Phelps and Tad Dickerson to our ranks.

Next Wednesday, March 8th is our meeting from 7-9 pm at the Plymouth Community Arts Council.

We will be hosting a lecture by Erik Tait an award winning magician from Columbus, Ohio. We hope to have a great turnout from our membership as well as from other clubs. We'll see you there.

We had a great meeting in February with a wonderful magician performing to kick off the meeting. Ask someone how amazing it was. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Views expressed by the President do not necessarily reflect those of the AAMC at large.]

On Sat. Feb. 18th our Magic Open House was a huge success at the Plymouth District Library. We'd like to thank Bon Goodwin for the idea and setting up the event. We entertained many, many families with magic, balloons and stickers. It was a fun time had by all. See Around the Town below for photos.

We are looking forward to the next two months meetings and our Parlor Magic Show on May 27th.



Spotlight
By [Karl Rabe](#)

As a reoccurring feature of the Magic Messenger we will highlight a member and ask them to answer a few questions about themselves. This month the “Spotlight” is on John Russell. John is a former President of the AAMC, serving several terms. At a later time in his life, John left his “Day Job” and became a full-time professional.



Where did you grow up / where have you lived?

I grew up in Southgate Michigan, and have lived mostly in what is referred to as "Downriver". Also lived in South Bend Indiana, Chicago, and San Antonio Texas. Currently live in Grosse Ile, MI

How did you get started in magic?

Like many magicians, I received a magic set for Christmas when I was in 2nd grade. I faithfully watched Mark Wilson and The Magic Land of Alakazam, and Milky the Clown, who also did magic on our local tv station.

What type of magic do you perform?

I perform stand-up, or stage magic mostly for adult audiences. RV Resorts, 55+ communities, assisted and independent living, and senior/adult groups. I don't do much in the way of close-up, and I regularly tell groups of magicians that I am NOT a "card guy".

What is your favorite magic book?

Henry Hay's "Amateur Magician's Handbook" really got me started; these days, anything by Christopher Barnes, one of the most creative magic minds out there, in my opinion.

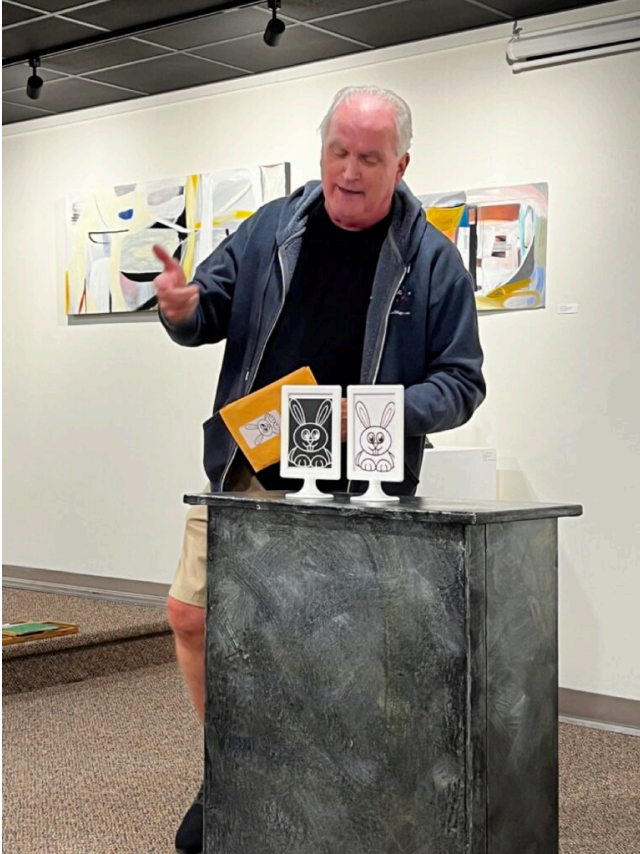
Who is your favorite Magician of all time?

There's not just one. I was inspired by an autobiography of Houdini when I was in elementary school; Mark Wilson, Harry Blackstone Jr. These days, Scott Alexander, Rocco, and Shawn Farquhar all never cease to amaze and inspire me.

Do you have any words of wisdom for newer magicians?

Read books on magic tricks, biographies of famous magicians, and books on magic philosophy and performance. Practice. Don't just focus on one type of magic. Be as well

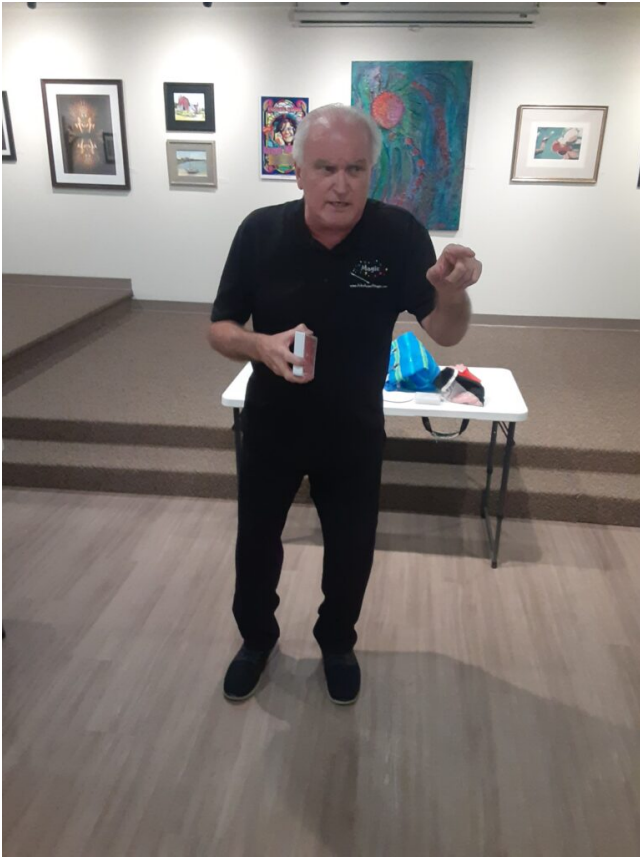
rounded as you can. Don't buy a magic trick to see how it works.



John Russell demonstrates a home-made sucker trick using Ikea frames



John Russell – We're all the same on the inside



John Russell Lottery
Prediction



John Russell



Former President – John
Russell



John Russell's Nightmare



Secretary's Report
By [Karl Rabe](#)

We kicked-off with Magic and our Kick-off Performer this month was Club President Dan Jones. Dan started with a jumbo four-card routine that centered on his Dad getting Dan to do his chores. Apparently Dan's continued failure to select the Face Card doomed him to a life of indentured servitude... at least while he was living at home. Next Dan performed a nice Silk Blow color-changing effect where a sip of a colored liquid from a glass caused a white silk to change colors when blown

through the tube. Ultimately he ended up with a chain of three silks.



Introductions

Next we welcomed new member **Mark Wilson Phelps** (no relation). Mark is self-proclaimed as the “Okayest Magician” and hails from Farmington Michigan. Mark’s passion is for coin slight-of-hand but also performs some card magic and other close-up.

We also welcomed a guest **Brian Campbell**. Brian is a Professional Santa and is interested in adding some magic effects to his repertoire.

Then it was on to our Self Introductions and Magic Question

roundtable. In recognition of Valentine's Day, this month's question was "What do you **love** about magic". A bonus question was to share what trick you might perform for **couples**.

- Many responses centered on the joy and wonder we bring to our audiences and the making of memories.
- The camaraderie and joy of sharing the love of magic with fellow magicians was also high on the list. The exchange of ideas and the generosity of magicians willing to share the art with others was mentioned.
- The psychology involved in magic was of interested to many.
- The creativity and the ability to contribute to the art form of Magic as also high on several people's list.
- A few mentioned that they are interested in the history of magic and how it all comes together.
- As to magic for couples, Anniversary Waltz ([available FREE from Penguin Magic](#)) was mentioned as well as Sponge Rabbits (and their ability to reproduce), any trick where the spectators take away a souvenir and specifically "Double Exposure".



Bits of Business

Sean provided an update on our next Parlor Show. There will be two shows on one day. The times will be determined soon. Sean shared we hope to do a number of rehearsals via Zoom to allow us more rehearsal time without travel time. Work has started on the poster. Volunteers will be needed for all aspects of the show. We can use walk-around performers, greeters, concessions, ushers, stage hands. This is a great opportunity to learn how a show is put on. Contact Sean directly to sign-up.

Everyone was reminded of upcoming events... see Around the Town for details

- March Lecture with [Erik Tait](#). This will be IN PLACE of our usual meeting, at the same time and location as we normally meet. Admittance is \$10 for members of the AAMC and affiliated clubs, \$20 for non-members.
- AAMC Open House at the Plymouth District Library. Volunteers are needed – Contact Bob Goodwin.

Karl shared that the PRIVATE Facebook group is up and running. This is a place members can share with each other. You can join [here](#) if you already haven't. This group is private for AAMC members only.

Phil Mann has generously offered to invite members over to his "Cave of Wonders" for magic and fun. When this is planned, Karl will help communicate to members.

Teach-a-Trick

This month teach-a-trick was on the Mercury Card Fold. Sean brought in a crate of used casino cards and walked members through a tutorial. Then we all folded cards until our fingers were sore as more experienced members gave pointers and coached. If you want to continue learning the Mercury Card Fold, these are a couple of sources.

- [Disturb Reality YouTube Tutorial](#)
- [Complete Deception YouTube Tutorial](#)

Tips

- This move requires a lot of practice to make a consistently neat fold.
- It is easier to learn with half of a deck before learning it with a full deck.
- There are tools available, such as [The Bullet](#), to perfectly score the card that makes it fold perfectly much more easily.

Performances

Next it was on to performances.

- Karl performed two routines using the Mercury Card fold. First, was signed card to shoe which involved volunteer Mike Bogdas wearing a mask to protect him from the smell (and to provide more than ample misdirection for the fold). Second was Karl's unique take on signed card to Altoid tin. Karl will detail the construction of this gimmick in a future Inventor's Workshop.
- Captain Sean then shared a Rum toast with volunteer Phil

Mann, visibly pouring two shots of rum from a bottle. Then Sean produced a huge (dry) sail from the same bottle.

- Phil Mann shared a number of recent acquisitions including a Dragon Box, a Crystal Box, a Crystal Dice Cube with color changing dice, a wand for vanishing silks, a silk production Pagoda and a dragon tube to silk to rose effect.
- Mike Bogdas shared a clever Arm Chopper his Grandfather built that is “foolproof” and can be operated by the spectator. There is no need for the magician to “throw a switch” to activate the secret.
- New member Mark Phelps shared a slight-of-hand card change routine. Mark tried to pull a card named by Phil Mann out of the center of the deck and apparently failed... but then redeemed himself by visibly changing that card into Phil’s selected card.
- Michael Doyle shared a couple routines. He did a Zodiac Prediction (Novis by Ellusionist w/ Peek Smith) and a Dice Roll Prediction (Mental Dice).
- For a magnificent finale Don Oesterwind performed Jumbo Sidekick assisted by Jacob Oesterwind. Fitting the theme of Love, Don shared the back-story of his long unrequited love of the Collector’s Workshop Jumbo Sidekick and his ultimate fulfillment of his dream to acquire one for himself. Jacob demonstrated his poor aim, time and time again, as the props were seemingly destroyed until ultimately Don was able to make order out of chaos and produce the selected card!



Jacob and Don Oesterwind perform Jumbo Sidekick



Dan Jones

Then it was on socializing and jamming for the remainder of the night.



The Broken Wand
By [Karl Rabe](#)

F. James “Jim” Malczewski, age 94, passed away February 25, 2023. He was born July 11, 1928 in Detroit, Michigan, son of the late Francis and Rose Malczewski. He was a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians and loved performing magic to all kinds of audiences. His daughters have fond memories of when they were younger assisting him at performances as magician assistants. Jim was also a talented

woodworker and enjoyed that has a hobby.

Jim was a member of both the Ann Arbor Magic Club and the Detroit Magic Club. Jim was a club member before my time, but other magicians had some recollections.

- Michael Mode: "This is sad news. I really liked Jim. He was so nice and always had a big smile on his face.
- Bill Schulert: "I Was just thinking of him yesterday...a really nice magician with a good and generous spirit."
- Jeff Boyer" "Sorry to hear this. I remember Jim. I first met him about 30 years ago."
- Tropical Illusions: "I remember him well... back in the days. Always performed in club shows at the beckoned call. Him and his wife good members."

Jim is survived by his daughters: Susan Malczewski and Bonnie (Yuan-Min) Liu; his grandsons: Isaac and Jonah; his brothers: Robert (Joan) Malczewski and Ronald (Clara) Malczewski. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews. Jim was preceded in death by his wife, Carolyn in 2008; his parents; his brother, Richard (Kitty) Malczewski; and his sister, Elaine (John) Czarski.



Mirf Tales
By Sean Naes



Mirf Tales: Walking before running

First and foremost, Mirf's health and wellbeing are paramount so I will start by briefly telling you about Mirf's health and development. When I picked up Mirf from the Breeder the first thing I did was schedule an appointment with our local veterinarian. His first appointment Dr. Gaide said he was a very healthy handsome looking kitten but diagnosed Mirf as having a left forelimb mild carpal valgus conformation. This means that the ulnar is growing faster than the radius and could lead to lameness. We were referred to Dr. DeCamp, a veterinary orthopedic surgeon.

We scheduled an appointment and took Mirf to Dr. Decamp. He ordered X-rays and conducted an examination. I had to sit out in the truck while they took Mirf into the clinic, they are still following covid protocols in January 2023. When the examination was done, they returned Mirf to the truck and told me the doctor would call me on my cell phone to discuss the findings. Oh, and the kind assistant said not to go anywhere, as if I would until I heard from the doctor. I received a text with the x-rays and the phone rang. It was Dr. DeCamp. He told me Mirf was such a calm laid back kitten that he didn't have to sedate him to do



the x-rays (which consequently save me a ton of money). Hearing that he was so relaxed with strangers like this was an exciting indication that he would be a good candidate to be a "circus kitty". Dr. DeCamp explained to me on the x-rays what the concerns were with Mirf's leg. He also explained the various treatments for example splinting the leg to impinge the growth of one of the bones is the least invasive and sometimes successful. The primary treatment is to arthroscopically excise a triangular piece of bone to shorten the offender, which does not sound pleasant but would prevent lameness. However, the doctor's recommendation was to wait and reevaluate in 30 days. Well 30 days later we were back at Dr. Decamps office for another set of x-rays. The veterinary assistant took Mirf and I waited in the Truck again. The veterinary tech brought Mirf back about 15 minutes later and told me the doctor would call...again. Shortly thereafter the phone rang, and it was Dr. DeCamp. The good doctor told me that he didn't feel the need to x-ray Mirf because he could tell by examination the condition is improving and he downgraded Mirf's diagnosis from a deformity to a concern. He will be re-evaluated at the end of the super rapid growth phase which is at eight months or approximately April 12, 2023. He explained approximately 85% a Maine Coons growth is in the first 8 months and reach full growth around 3-5 years. The long-term prognosis is that Mirf should be fine. This meant to me that we can move ahead full sail.



One of the things that impressed both the veterinarians' offices, Mirf did not arrive in a carrier to be handed off like a parcel, no, Mirf arrived harnessed and tethered in arm while being well behaved. When we visit our local veterinarian, I carry Mirf and he sits on the counter in front of me while we check in then he sits in my lap while we're waiting. Dog's around us can be losing their minds,

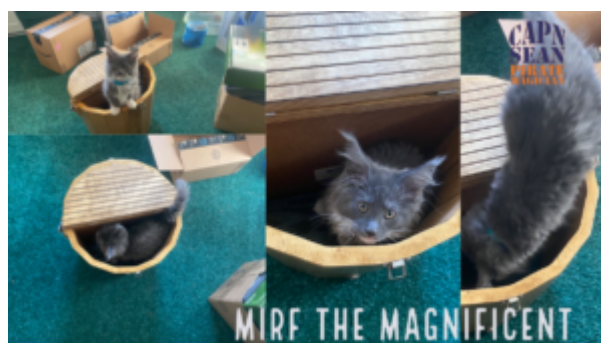
barking like crazy while Mirf just looks at them like “what’s your issue?”. Mirf was unfazed by veterinary visits, another good sign. He’s now been to all of his scheduled veterinary visits and received all of his vaccinations and a couple extra because he’s “going on the road”. Now we visit the vet for health certificates, which are only good for 30 days from the date of issue, needless to say we’ll be seeing the Dr. Gaide almost monthly.



You only have one chance to make a first impression, and when it comes to training animals, this is doubly true. You see, by getting Mirf from a breeder at 8 weeks I have been able to control all of his exposures to

socialize and acclimate Mirf to diverse environments. I don’t have to deal with someone else’s trauma or abuse. Mirf came to me as a blank slate, and I protect that slate with my life. I need him to be steadfast, if I rush him, I will ruin him. After Mirf’s first Veterinary appointment I started taking Mirf everywhere I legally could without violating any rules or any establishment. The veterinarian was a great first exposure to chaos and I researched in advance places that I could take him. I started by taking him with me to the gas station. Mirf has to be able to ride for long periods without losing his crap. When he has to literally, he does it in a litter box in the truck which then requires pulling over and immediately cleaning it.

What it is, I think he is missing his first festival already, but that’s later in the next tale. I do not have any formal feline behavioral training. My philosophy to training is research and



consultation in advance. Then it becomes a matter of exposure, learning then mastery. I started with a Duck Bucket I already had. The first time I tried to “put” Mirf into the duck bucket he told me to bleep off in no uncertain terms. I wasn’t really thinking, and I I tried too fast. Realizing defeat, I put the duck bucket away for about 3 days and just focused on socialization by taking him on errands. After a cooling period I brought the duck bucket out and opened the top and left it open. I threw one of his toys in there and let him retrieve it, I also would drop treats inside the bucket multiple times a day for him to retrieve at his leisure. This went on for about a week before I found him napping in the open bucket one day. After that point I started closing the bucket and opening it when he was in there extending the times the bucket was closed from ten seconds to start with.



At the end of our time with the duck bucket I could close the lid for five minutes without him attempting to escape. I approached it with him as if it was a game we were playing, and he had fun with it. Mirf

quickly outgrew the duck bucket, but it was very beneficial while it lasted. I needed to continue normalizing these kinds of activities, so we used cardboard boxes and blankets until the props I ordered arrived. I would put him in a cardboard box, close it up and he would “hide” while we played “hide and surprise”. When I open the box, he pops up. We also play a game with a blanket similar to the parachute game I played with the other children in Elementary School during gym class. I flare the blanket up and let it drift down on him, when lift it up, he pops up. It’s gotten to the point where if he hears the sound of the bed being made, he comes running!

I commissioned Ozark Magic Manufacturing to build a production cage and a vanishing chest for Mirf. When Mirf's first prop, the production cage arrived it was momentous. I was a little concerned because I had lost a month of training time in a prop, but our makeshift activities sufficed. As soon as I had brought the box into the house, he claimed it as his own. Once I had his production cage unwrapped and opened up, Mirf climbed right in and made himself at home.



Mirf attended his first festival this past weekend, the Nordic Fire Festival, he far exceeded expectations, that's next month's tale.

Thank you for reading,

Cap'n Sean



Around the Town
By [Karl Rabe](#)

Upcoming Events

You don't want to miss the Erik Tait lecture to be held March 8 at 7:00 pm at the Plymouth Community Arts Council. AAMC, Detroit and Toledo Magic Club members get in for only \$10. Others are only \$20. Hosted by the Ann Arbor Magic Club, this event will replace our normal monthly meeting. It is at the same time and location as our normally scheduled meeting.



Erik Tait has won awards for both standup comedy and magic throughout North America, appeared on Penn & Teller: Fool Us and was the 2018 current International Brotherhood of Magicians Gold Cups Close Up Competition Champion. He took home 3rd place at FISM Quebec 2022, the world championships of magic, in the category of card magic. Erik is only the fourth American to accomplish this, and the first American to stand on the podium for card magic in two decades. Erik hails from Wausau Wisconsin, which he doesn't remember because he left it when he was very young. A top graduate of the Comedy Writing and Performance Program at Humber College in Toronto, Erik is currently the only magician in the world with a college degree in hilarious and can academically prove he is hysterical. His client list has some of the most recognizable brands in the country including Honda, Macy's, and Bark Box.

Learn more about Erik at [his website.](#)

Next Meeting

- MAR 8 Wed** 7:00 pm AAMC Monthly Meeting @ Plymouth Community Arts Council

Next Show

- MAY 27 Sat** 4:00 pm Parlor Magic Show – Afternoon @ Plymouth Community Arts Council
- MAY 27 Sat** 7:00 pm Parlor Magic Show – Evening @ Plymouth Community Arts Council

Other Upcoming Events

- MAR 8 Wed** 7:00 pm Erik Tait Lecture @ Plymouth Community Arts Council
- APR 1 Sat** all-day Michigan Magic Day 2023
- AUG 12 Sat** all-day AAMC Annual Picnic
- SEP 24 Sun** all-day AAMC Annual Flea Market

Check out John Luka's Magic page and his well maintained [list of Michigan Events](#)

All AAMC Events and details can be viewed on the [website calendar](#).

Last Month's Events

The Club hosted an Open House at the Plymouth Library on Saturday February 18th. The purpose was to attract new members and to generate interest in the upcoming Parlor Shows. The turnout was fantastic! Club members performed continuously for a steady stream of kids and parents. A big thank you to Bob Goodwin for conceiving the idea and all the volunteers that helped him put this together, performed, made signs, etc.

Ann Arbor Magic Club

MAGIC OPEN HOUSE

Today 1:30-4:30pm



All are
welcome!






The AAMC is a non-profit organization whose focus is to advance the magical arts by making available equipment, education, mentors and opportunities for magical enthusiasts of all ages to expand their craft. Our emphasis is on fun and enjoyment. We welcome anyone, whether young or old, with an interest in magic.

We were lucky to have professional photographer Erin Hannum on hand to take these wonderful pictures. Check out her website at <https://www.erinhanum.com>. Erin is the daughter of new member Mark Phelps. These photos may not be used without crediting Erin.



Funny Business
By [Karl Rabe](#)



	 <p>Visit the club website for past issues, calendar of upcoming events, and other features and articles.</p>		 <p>Join our Private Facebook Group to connect and exchange ideas and information with other members.</p>		 <p>Like our Public Facebook Page and share it with Friends and Family.</p>	
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